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RECENT SYRIAC TEXTS

The Book of Protection. Being a collection of charms. Now edited for the first time from Syriac MSS., with translation, introduction, and notes. By HERMANN GOLLANCZ, M.A., D.Litt. London: HENRY FROWDE, 1912.

Scholars will remember Dr. Gollancz's interesting paper, 'A Selection of Charms from Syriac Manuscripts', published in the *Actes* of the Eleventh International Congress of Orientalists. The present volume gives in full the two manuscripts from which those selections were made, and along with these, which are the editor's private property, he publishes a third parallel codex which is at Cambridge University. Also he makes reference to a fourth codex of similar character in the British Museum. His private manuscripts agree closely, the one with that in the Museum, the other with that at Cambridge, while the two groups contain a number of identical charms, so that it appears that the collation offers quite a standard corpus of magical inscriptions in use among the Nestorian Christians to this day. His codex A was written in 1802, the second, which is shorter, he adjudges to be older. The Introduction notices several points of interest in the charms, and there are brief foot-notes on difficult passages and points of interpretation, probably sufficient for a somewhat monotonous series of texts.

The magic is the direct heir of the earlier incantations of the Mesopotamian valley, familiar to us in the bowl texts of the early Christian centuries, and going back to the Babylonian magical texts. Jewish scholars will recognize many points of contact with charms still current in Jewish households, e.g. the Lilith legends. The legend indeed plays a larger part in these charms

than in the elder forms ; that is, some sacred story or reference from biblical or hagiological lore is cited with prophylactic intent. For example (p. xxxi): 'King Solomon was building the house to the name of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit was handing him the stone. Solomon stooped to take hold of the stone ; he hurt his back, his loin ruptured, and he gave forth a bitter cry. Whereupon our Lord said unto his disciples, What voice of crying is this ? and they replied unto him, It is that of Solomon, the son of David, who is building the terrific, blessed house.' The charm is accordingly of avail for an injury to the back. An incantation for a cold consists in the reference to the fact that 'our Lord as a little boy and his mother were subject' to this malady (p. xli). As over against the elder charms there is a diminution of the number of species of evil spirits exorcised ; their place is taken by long catalogues of various diseases and social calamities. The same rationalizing progress is found in the Babylonian medical charms published by Kùchler, and also in the Jewish medical texts from Mosul, edited by R. C. Thompson. Also our charms are distinguished by the very large number of saints whose names are invoked, names which defy for the most part all hagiological research. They take the place of the angelic names in Jewish magic. There is a very modern air about the whole collection ; the musket is frequently exorcised and even the business letter has received an appropriate charm (p. xliii). The unhappy lot of the Christians under Muslim rule appears in the constant exorcisms of the power of evil emirs, governors, &c. The written charm is given a name which is found only in the Syriac collections ; they are called יֶדָא, on which the author gives a note, p. xxv. May the word mean a 'hand', with reference to the well-known prophylactic power of the hand in actual use and symbolically ? The work is illustrated with reproductions of the very crude designs of saints and devils which decorate the manuscripts.

Horae Semiticae, No. IX. The Forty Martyrs of the Sinai Desert and the Story of Eulogios. From a Palestinian Syriac and Arabic palimpsest. Transcribed by AGNES SMITH LEWIS, M.R.A.S. Cambridge: UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1912.

This volume is another fruit of the travels and scholarship of the distinguished Cambridge sisters. It presents a new category of the so far confined Syro-Palestinian literature, namely, hagiological story, of which only a few fragments had hitherto been known (see Schulthess, *Lexicon*, p. xvi). Besides the 'Forty Martyrs' and the story of Eulogios, which is a charming little tale, there is a fragment of the story of the patrician Anastasia, who escaped from court life and assumed the habit of a hermit. It is unfortunate that none of these hagiologies is new, all being known to us in their Greek form, from which these Syriac texts have been translated. The 'Forty Martyrs' is given by Combefis in his *Christi martyrorum triumphi*, and 'Eulogios' and 'Anastasia' in Clugnet, *Bibliothèque hagiographie orientale*, i (these literary details are scattered through the edition before us). The literature of the dialect accordingly still retains its characteristic as merely a group of versions from the Greek.

The text is but slightly pointed; we may notice the occasional appearance of the pointed 𐤀 to denote final ֵ of 𐤀ֿ verbs. It appears to be carefully written, with few of the errors which have entered plentifully into the manuscripts of the dialect. The editing is almost without fault. On p. 56 (Syriac numbering) b, 13 read סיבן for סיבו. Is אשתתפית, evidently for אשתתפית, the true reading, p. 25 b, 13? If so, a *sic* might have been added. In fact a good deal more might have been done in the way of textual notes and comments, nor does the Glossary, which is intended to include all the uncommon words and forms found in this volume, and also in no. viii of the same series (*Codex Climaci rescriptus*), fulfil its purpose. A fresh collation of the text would be necessary in order to collect all the noticeable forms. We may remark אתי, p. 26 a, 8, for Greek ἔτι, overlooked by Mrs. Lewis and unknown to Schulthess. On p. 62 b, 2 occurs

another novel form, a Semitic word coloured by the Greek: **פר** in **פר מן יומא** 'perchance more than a day'. It appears to be a contraction of **פריע** or **פרוע**, known in all the Palestinian dialects in the sense of *ταχέως*: our word is used to render the related *τάχα*, 'perhaps'; is the shortening artificial, in conformity with the proportions in length of the Greek words? The **שאמין** on p. 57 a, 5, listed in the Glossary under **שם**, should be under **שום**. Moreover, the same form occurring p. 68 b, 21, used in the sense of 'think', is omitted in the Glossary; Schulthess notices but one instance of the verb, which is frequent in the Rabbinic. The peculiar form **דומלין**, translated 'full', p. 21 b, 21, is ignored. Observe also the form **יבועין**, p. 51 b, 15, translated as though from **בעצ**, but not given in the Glossary.

There are some slips in the translation. Evidently **סבא**, which recurs repeatedly on pp. 20 ff., beginning 20 b, 4, cannot be the proper name Saba (we should then have the title 'father'); throughout it is the epithet, 'old man', of the saint in question; thus from p. 21 on it is the title of father Joseph. I have not the Greek text at hand, which may contradict me, but even then it would not make sense. The same word also occurs at the beginning of the story, p. 20 a, 6, where the editor translates 'he dwelt there with Saba (**בסבא**) above father Moses'; the preposition cannot have this meaning. I might suggest a common noun, 'in the neighbourhood'. On p. 36 b, 21, **אדמו** cannot mean 'flung themselves on him'; may the verb have the sense known in the Edessene, 'become bloody', and so mean here 'flush with rage'? The text is evidently in disorder at bottom of p. 42 b, and means apparently 'because the barbarians were oppressing their land'. Page 56 a, 5, **איפרכי** is not 'Africa', but 'eparchy', anticipating the story which tells how Eulogios became eparch. Below, l. 11, **אחונן** is 'our brother', not 'one brother' (typographical error?). P. 58 a, 22, **מיטוני** is translated according to the literal Greek, 'repentance', but it means here as in Edessene, 'obeisance'. Translate p. 67 a, 7 ff., 'and he (the Ethiopian, a term for Satan—cf. Ep. Barnabas, 4. 9) brought him out *from* before the prefecture', i.e. as condemned. For

p. 69 a, 19 ff., we have this senseless rendering: 'Thy breakfast is quite safe from these mockeries', but translate 'in faith (cf. 68 a, 7) leave off from these mockeries'. Translate 70 a, 2 and 5, 'patrician', not 'eparch'. In 71 b, 7 ܐܘܠ ܠܥܠܡܐ appears to mean 'I must go to eternity', i. e. 'die', certainly not 'go to the world'. In the story of Anastasia, 82 b, 7 ff., translate 'once a week he used to go to father Daniel'. P. 83 b, 20, ܚܫܬܐ is 'potsherd', as in l. 7, and does not need the Arabic note which the editor wrongly appends. The emendation in 70 a, 14, ܒ[ܐܠܦܐ], translated 'I cast the man into a ship', may be supported by the Greek; without control from that quarter ܒ[ܐܒܪܢܐ] would be better, 'I cast the man into destruction'.

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